



REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN 2007

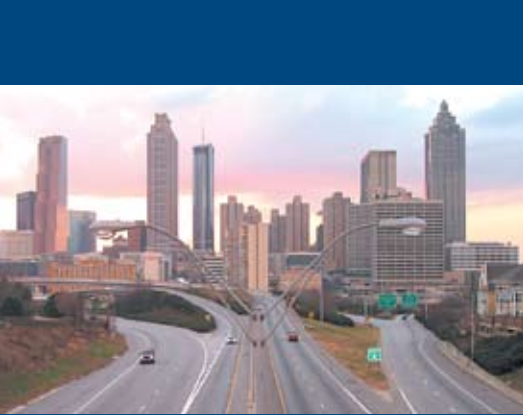
Summary Report



ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION



INTRODUCTION



Envision6 Planning Process



The contents of this report reflect the views of the persons preparing the document and those individuals are responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Department of Transportation of the State of Georgia. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulations.

The Atlanta region has added more residents than any of the other 361 metro areas in the nation during this decade. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) forecasts that 2.3 million more people will move to this region in the next 25 years. Growth creates many economic opportunities for our region's citizens to improve their quality of life. But the costs of growth include traffic congestion with many disadvantaged residents without access to job opportunities in growing areas.

How can we accommodate this growth and still maintain our high quality of life? The ARC Board on September 26, 2007 adopted the *Envision6* Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and 2008-2013 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as a strategy to address our future mobility and growth needs.

This *Envision6* Regional Transportation Plan Summary Report provides an overview of key challenges, strategies, projects and system performance. The *Envision6* planning process focused on strategies to best accomplish this goal, within available funding, through the year 2030. ARC emphasizes making decisions in a transparent and logical manner, considering all federally-required planning factors.

As part of the planning process, the following goals were defined to articulate regional values:

- Improve accessibility and mobility for all people and freight.
- Encourage and promote the safety, security, efficient development, management and operation of the surface transportation system.
- Protect and improve the environment and quality of life.
- Support economic growth and development.

This document provides a general overview of key planning issues and recommendations. Additional information, including detailed project listings, is available online at the ARC website at www.atlantaregional.com/envision6.

CHALLENGES

The confluence of several events and trends created the most difficult planning environment in recent memory. While these challenges were successfully addressed in *Envision6*, much work remains to address the long-term growth and funding challenges of the Atlanta region:

- 1. Rapid Growth Continues** - No region has grown more than Atlanta since 2000. The region's population is expected to reach almost 7 million by the year 2030.
- 2. Funding Capacity Deteriorates** - U. S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) 2007 planning regulations required that revenue and cost estimates use an inflation rate to reflect year of expenditure dollars. This in conjunction with rapid inflation since the adoption of the previous Mobility 2030 RTP in 2004, contributed to a \$4.3 billion funding shortfall. Projects were delayed, modified or removed from the RTP to bring project costs in line with expected funding.
- 3. Congestion Challenges Grow** - Rapid growth in combination with limited project funding is leading to worsening congestion. The Congestion Mitigation Task Force, which established a project evaluation criterion of 70 percent for congestion relief, calls for the use of the Travel Time Index as an official measure of regional congestion – with a 2030 target of 1.35.*
- 3. Project Prioritization** - Projects will continue to be closely evaluated for effectiveness. Prioritizing *Envision6* projects required the development of an innovative travel demand modeling process in which the congestion relief potential and benefit/cost ratio for over 250 major roadway and transit capacity projects were calculated.
- 5. Travel Options Threatened for the Disadvantaged** - Significant amounts of regional growth continues to occur in areas inaccessible to the region's transit dependent population. Expanding travel options for these residents improves the quality of life and increases economic opportunity.

• A Travel Time Index of 1.35 indicates a trip taking 35% longer during peak congested conditions than in free flow conditions.

Metro Area	Population Growth 2000-2006
Atlanta/Sandy Springs/Marietta, GA	890,211
Dallas/Fort Worth/Arlington, TX	842,449
Houston/Sugar Land/Baytown, TX	824,547
Phoenix/Mesa/Scottsdale, AZ	787,306
Riverside/San Bernardino/Ontario, CA	771,314
Los Angeles/Long Beach/Santa Ana, CA	584,510
New York/Northern New Jersey/Long Island, NY/NJ/PA	495,154
Washington/Arlington/Alexandria, DC/VA/MD/WV	494,220
Miami/Fort Lauderdale/Miami Beach, FL	455,869
Chicago/Naperville/Joliet, IL/IN/WI	407,133

Source: US Census Bureau, 2007

STAKEHOLDER & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



The development of *Envision6* was like no other in ARC's history of RTP processes. Instead of providing a "Call for Projects," the funding deficit required removal of projects from the fiscally constrained plan. In order to build an efficient plan to meet regional goals with limited resources, *Envision6* outreach focused strongly on local input. Local officials, planning boards and staff, community organizations and the general public were provided a variety of formats for review and input.

Public Concerns and Areas of Interest

The *Envision6* public participation process revealed areas of concern and interest from residents of the region:

What the Public has Said	How Plan Addressed	What the Public has Said	How Plan Addressed
Relieve congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Project prioritization ✓ Managed lanes ✓ Metro Arterial Connector ✓ Regional Strategic Transportation System ✓ Congestion Management Process 	Improve travel accessibility for seniors and persons with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Livable Centers Initiative ✓ Human Services Transportation Plan
Relieve bottlenecks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Interstate bottleneck relief ✓ Arterial bypasses ✓ Smart corridor enhancements ✓ Signalization 	Do something about the impacts of growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Livable Centers Initiative ✓ Unified Growth Policy Map ✓ Regional Development Plan Policies
Do something about truck traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Truck-only lanes ✓ Freight Mobility Study 	Provide transit options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bus Rapid Transit ✓ Atlanta Beltline ✓ Financial support of MARTA and other transit operators ✓ Peachtree Streetcar ✓ Commuter rail
Improve accessibility to transit stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Livable Centers Initiative ✓ Regional Development Plan policies ✓ Support of Transportation Demand Management ✓ Bicycle Transportation & Pedestrian Walkways Plan 	Improve project implementation timeframes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Project assessment ✓ Livable Centers Initiative management process update
		Protect the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Federal air quality goals met ✓ Environmental consultation and mitigation

STAKEHOLDER & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Extensive use of surveys, polls and questionnaires were used to supplement meetings. Some consistent messages were supported by the majority of respondents in these outreach efforts:

- General agreement that the *Envision6* plan is seeking to accomplish what individuals want for their travel
- No substantial support for toll road concessions but agreement that managed lanes are a valid option with reservations
- Tolling car pool lanes is not a popular concept
- Intersection relief is widely supported
- Bus Rapid Transit on its own guideway is supported
- Transit options are necessary for the metro region
- Bicycle and pedestrian networks are popular
- Smart corridor technologies have substantial support
- Truck-only lanes are a viable option to remove trucks from roadways
- Focusing on land use issues along with transportation planning is accepted
- Public outreach formats on the internet are widely supported

Accomplishments

The *Envision6* public involvement outreach effort succeeded in reaching out to a broad audience and enabled regional residents to discuss their concerns and provide feedback. The documented outreach effort includes only the primary outreach numbers. Many more citizens and community leaders were involved in the process through secondary forms of outreach and education, such as improved communication channels, fact sheet distribution and transportation interest groups.

Public Involvement by the Numbers

1	Voiceover presentation
1	Public hearing
2	Online public meetings
2	Scientific polls
2	TV shows produced and distributed to local county access stations
3	Online surveys
3	Podcasts
5	Workshops/Charrettes
6	Transportation fairs
40	County tabletop displays
47	Public meetings
104	"Community Conversations" with local stakeholders
420	Public comments received
683	Attendees at workshops and charrettes
1,842	Attendees at public meetings
3,136	Respondents to polls, questionnaires and surveys



UNIFIED GROWTH POLICY MAP (UGPM)

Coordination between land use and regional transportation is essential in providing long-term mobility in a rapidly growing region. Land use and transportation decisions have historically been independent due in part to differing governmental entities being responsible for implementation.

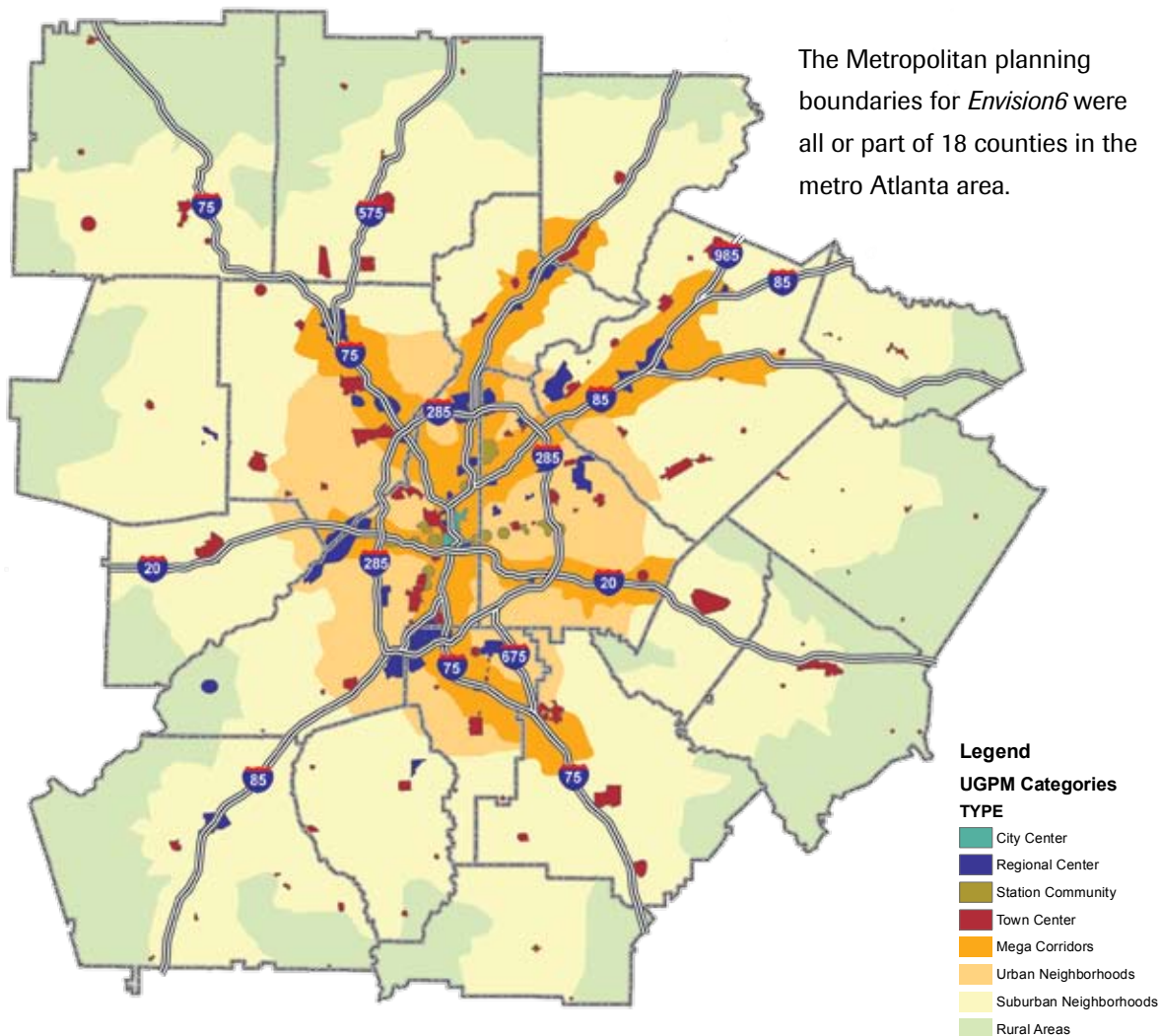
As we address the needs for a region of almost 7 million people, close coordination is required to ensure that land use and transportation decisions enhance mobility while minimizing the need for significant investments.

The Unified Growth Policy Map (UGPM) is the policy document developed as part of the *Envision6* process that seeks to align transportation and land use decisions. Transportation investments should be consistent with solutions appropriate for area land use types as defined by the UGPM, such as city centers, parks, residential or industrial.

Next Steps

ARC will update the UGPM on an annual basis and use it in future RTP and TIP updates. Upcoming RTP updates will strengthen the relationship between land use and transportation.

UNIFIED GROWTH POLICY MAP (UGPM)



Map Uses

ARC uses the UGPM in project prioritization. The map reflects RDP policies and is part of the criteria used in project evaluation. Projects are evaluated based on the number and type of regional land use objectives and growth policies that each transportation project supports, including (but not limited to):

- Transit Amenities
- System Management (signal Timing, Access Management, Intelligent Transportation Systems(ITS))
- Connectivity to Activity Centers
- Bike/Pedestrian Elements

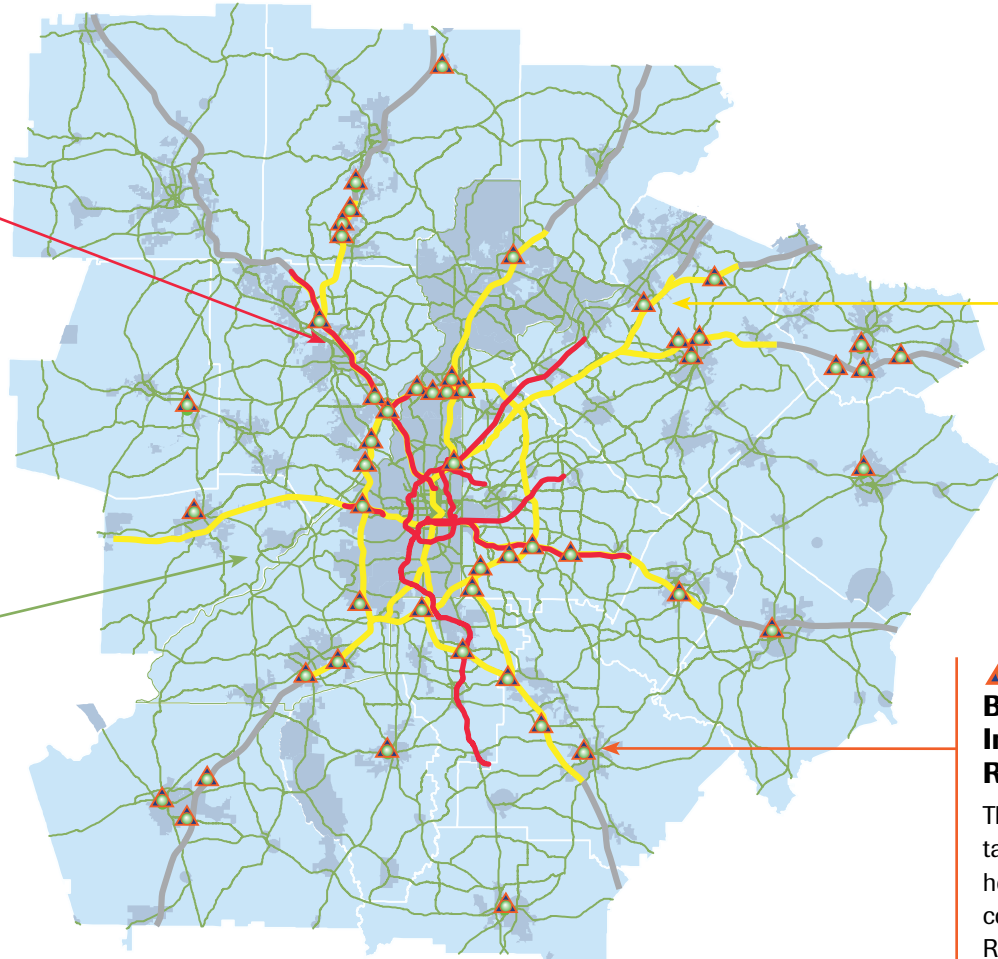
SYSTEM PLANNING CONCEPTS

Transit System Concept

Envision6 expands transit using cost-effective solutions such as high-speed bus rapid transit (BRT), commuter rail, light rail and streetcars. The RTP focuses on providing transit solutions supported by existing and forecast land use.

Arterial System Concept

Through *Envision6*, ARC's planning efforts provide strategies to support improved performance including establishing the Regional Strategic Transportation System (RSTS), strengthening access management and supporting regional thoroughfare system planning.



Managed Lanes and Expressway System Concept

The *Envision6* managed lanes concept helps address the congestion challenges along key interstate facilities. The use of managed lanes is an evolution of the region's High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) planning concept. Pricing provides a tool to manage demand and makes another travel option available for those who choose to use it.



Bottleneck Relief Interchange Concept/ Regional Bypass Concept

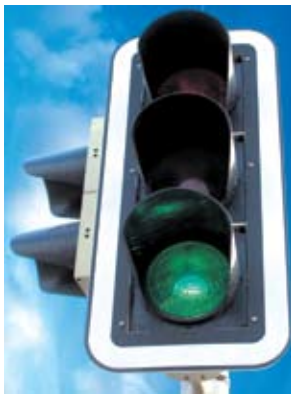
The bottleneck relief concept targets improvements at specific hot spots that contribute to congestion on a recurring basis. Regional bypass projects relieve congestion and support downtown revitalization efforts.

Note: Bicycle and Pedestrian network is not included on the map. Visit www.atlantaregional.com/envision6 for more information.

SYSTEM PLANNING CONCEPTS

Bicycle and Pedestrian System Concept

Bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs are critical mobility options supporting an improved quality of life. *Envision6* develops priority strategies for regional centers and corridors.



Smart Corridors

Envision6 emphasizes transportation management and operations. Smart Corridors programs and projects focus on Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) strategies that support effective corridor management and operations.

Congestion Management Process

Envision6 employs tools to monitor and address congestion, central to this is the Congestion Management Process (CMP). The following are the essential elements of the ARC's CMP – defining congestion, identification of congested locations, evaluation and ranking of congested locations, determination of mitigation strategies, implementation of strategies and monitoring of solutions.



Rapid growth and limited funding creates significant challenges for the Atlanta region.

The major system concepts in the RTP respond to these challenges.

INNOVATIONS



In May 2006, the ARC Board approved the Unified Growth Policy Map and the Regional Strategic Transportation System (RSTS). These documents provide policy regarding desired future growth trends and identify priority regional transportation facilities. *Envision6* recommends focusing limited federal transportation funds on the RSTS. The RSTS furthers the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods – including addressing current and future transportation demand. The RTP focuses on innovative investments that provide long term mobility through the proactive use of demand and lane management strategies:

Managed Lanes - Managed lanes are defined as a set of lanes where operational strategies are proactively implemented and managed in response to changing conditions. Active lane management provides and maintains mobility and travel options.

- The Atlanta region currently has managed lanes in the form of High Occupancy Vehicle lanes on major interstates such as I-75 and I-85.
- Pricing is a management strategy that regulates demand for the managed lanes thereby guaranteeing reliable trip times. Active or dynamic management allows the managed lanes to react to changing conditions on the facility. For example, as congestion builds during rush hour, the demand to use managed lanes also increases. Pricing “manages” the demand for the lanes by increasing and decreasing user fees ensuring operation efficiency.
- ARC’s Regional Freight Task Force supports voluntary Truck Only Lanes (TOL), lanes managed through eligibility and potentially pricing, to ensure freight mobility.

Transit - *Envision6* places increased emphasis on using the most cost-effective technology to serve regional transit needs. Approximately \$4 billion of transit expansions are planned for *Envision6*. The foundation of regional transit expansions to suburban areas continues to be the High-Speed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) concept. *Envision6*’s high-speed BRT projects cost-effectively connect suburban areas with regional employment centers.

INNOVATIONS



Managed Lanes



Light Rail Technology



Electronic Toll Collection



Truck Only Lanes



Streetcar/Trolley



Bus Rapid Transit

The RTP focuses on sustainable investments that provide long-term mobility through the proactive use of demand and lane management strategies.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



Managed Lanes

I-75/I-575 Northwest Corridor - I-75, one of the region's most congested interstates, will benefit from improvements enhancing performance and provide additional transportation choices and capacity options. These options potentially include managed lanes and truck-only lanes, bus rapid transit stations, park-and-ride facilities and improved local and express bus service.

SR 400 Managed Lanes - The SR 400 Corridor connects the heart of the region's northern suburbs to the key employment centers of Buckhead, Perimeter Center and Northpoint. Significant congestion occurs daily. Constructing managed lanes supports the expansion of regional transit and reduces peak period congestion. Pricing options are expected to be needed to fund the project.

New Transit Options

Commuter Rail - Commuter rail provides enhanced transit service from the southern portion of the region to downtown Atlanta. Commuter rail acts as a stimulus to encourage transit ridership throughout the region by providing a connection to existing transit service in the downtown area.

Peachtree Streetcar Project - The Peachtree Streetcar project will transform the Peachtree Corridor through the City of Atlanta into a grand boulevard, enhancing quality of life and transit options through the construction of a modern streetcar system operating in mixed traffic. Intersection improvements, widenings, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, operational improvements and signage will accompany the system to enhance the travel experience for all modes of transportation along the Peachtree Corridor.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Arterial Capacity

SR 92, Douglas County - Implementing railroad grade separations benefit traffic flow and improve travel times along major arterial segments. Projects such as the SR 92 grade separation at the US 78 and the Norfolk Southern rail line will enhance mobility along the SR 92 corridor.

Sugarloaf Parkway Extension (City of Lawrenceville Bypass) - Increasing commuter and truck traffic threatens the health of downtowns and contributes to congestion on major corridors. Bypass projects such as the Sugarloaf Connector support regional arterial system strategies by reducing congestion and addressing peak period congestion in areas experiencing rapid population and employment growth.

Bottleneck Relief

I-85 at GA 400 - This improvement creates direct additional interchange movements that currently do not exist between I-85 and SR 400. This includes direct connections from I-85 southbound to SR 400 and SR 400 to I-85 northbound. Interstate bottleneck relief projects reduce traffic delays by addressing recurring congestion on major facilities.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

Beltline Transportation Corridor - The Beltline transportation corridor, including a multi-use path and transit service, is a unique opportunity to link 45 neighborhoods with parks, transit and trails for commuters, bicyclists and pedestrians. This investment is intended to spur economic development and enhance mobility. Early phases create more than 33 miles of multi-use trails connecting 40 Atlanta parks and sets the stage for the construction of the project's transit component.



PLAN PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Performance results are calculated based on implementing the *Envision6* RTP versus making no improvements:

50 hours of traffic delay saved per person

15% to 20% reduction in freeway congestion

5% to 15% reduction in arterial congestion

715,000 daily transit boardings

\$655 saved per person per year in time and fuel costs

Transit System Performance

Transit ridership is forecast to increase by 300,000 from 2005, based on the implementation of the transit system concepts in *Envision6*.

The transit share of work trips for five of the region's major activity centers—Downtown, Midtown, Perimeter, Buckhead and Cumberland—increases to 19% in 2030 due to the strategies included in *Envision6*.

Roadway System Performance

Envision6 reduces urban freeway congestion by 19% compared to a no-build scenario.

Envision6 reduces suburban freeway congestion by 14% compared to a no-build scenario.

Air Quality

Envision6 meets federal transportation conformity requirements by demonstrating a reduction in emissions needed to meet air quality goals.

<i>Envision6</i> Includes:	
\$4 billion in transit projects	241 miles of new interstate/freeway lanes
\$11.9 billion in roadway capacity	1,931 miles of new arterial roads
\$9.4 billion in managed lanes expansion	150 miles of interstate toll lanes
\$944 million for sidewalk and pedestrian projects	53 miles of truck only lanes
\$1 billion for bridge upgrades and maintenance	238 miles of new on/off ramps
\$20.5 billion for regional transit operations and maintenance	267 miles of new bike lanes
\$14.5 billion for MARTA operations and maintenance	67 miles of new sidewalks
\$14.1 billion for road maintenance	44 miles of new pedestrian paths

PLAN PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Time Savings

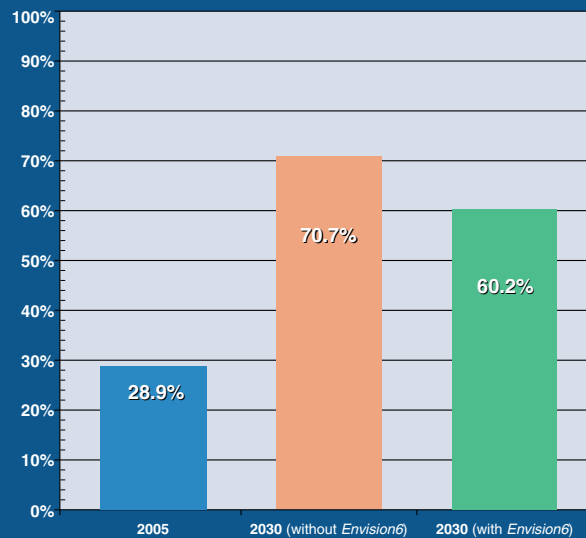
Implementing the *Envision6* RTP provides significant time savings for citizens in 2030 traveling on major roadway facilities as compared to a scenario in which no improvements are made.

The charts below illustrate the impact of *Envision6* improvements on both interstate facilities and major arterial roadways in congested conditions.

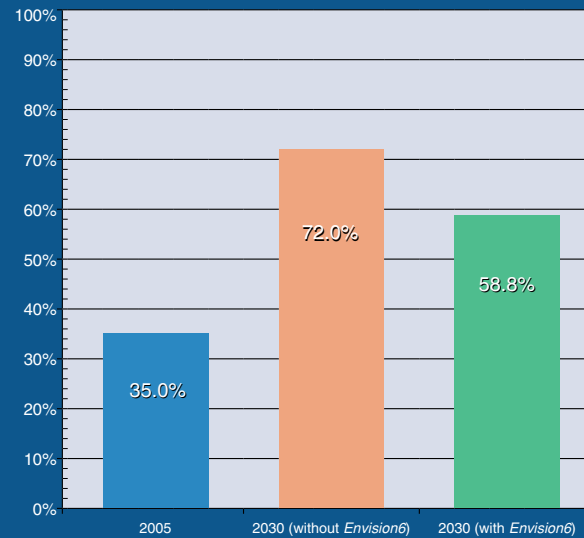
Percentage of Congested Vehicle Hours of Travel

(2030 with and without *Envision6* investment)

Interstate and Freeway (PM Period)



Arterial (PM Period)



FUNDING

Funding

Sufficient funding is central to implementation of the RTP. Federal guidelines require that the RTP be financially constrained with total plan costs not exceeding reasonably anticipated funding. Funding for transportation traditionally comes from the federal government, state sources and local revenue sources.

Forecasting funding resources through 2030 is more complex than ever. Since 2004, capital construction costs in the Atlanta region have increased over 25%. This has caused project construction schedules to be delayed and for many strategic projects to be delayed.

A number of factors influence anticipated revenue streams:

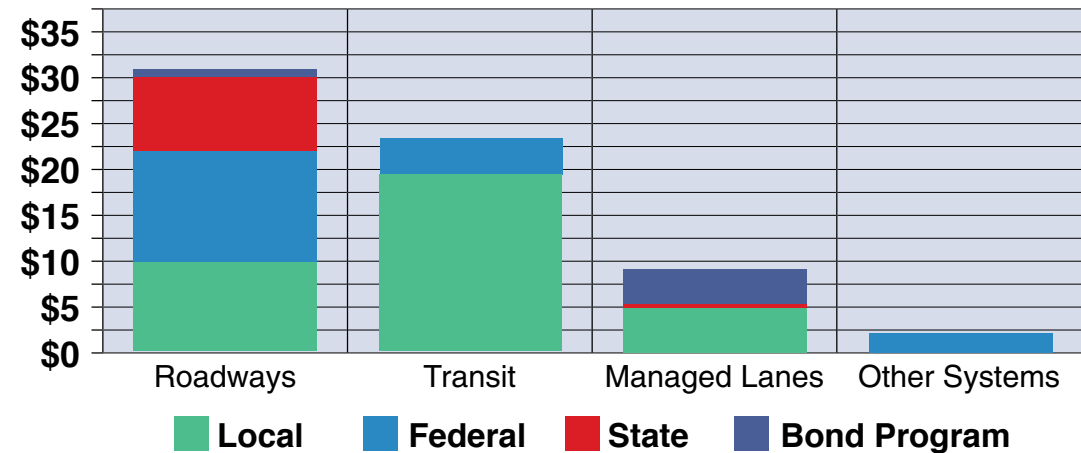
- **Federal Transportation Revenue** – Federal transportation funding comes through taxes collected on motor vehicle fuel, heavy-duty trucks and general funds deposited in the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). Historically, the HTF has carried a positive net balance due to Federal decisions to annually distribute or spend less than incoming revenues. Due to policy changes, the balance of the HTF is declining rapidly with projected balances to reach zero in 2009. If this occurs, only incoming revenues will be distributed, resulting in less transportation funding.
- **State Revenue Sources** – The State of Georgia collects two types of taxes on motor fuels to fund transportation investment: an excise tax of 7.5 cents per gallon and a 4% sales tax on the average retail price of fuel. Georgia's two motor fuel taxes are among the lowest in the country – currently higher than only Alaska and Wyoming. On a per capita inflation adjusted basis, in 2002 Georgians paid half the fuel tax on gasoline they paid in 1980. State revenue is not keeping pace with what is needed for transportation investments.
- **Local Revenue Sources** – Local funding for transportation comes primarily from two sources: Special Local Option Sales Taxes (SPLOST) and general fund expenditures. SPLOST revenues are collected for a limited time and dedicated to specific projects. Future transportation projects will rely more heavily on local funding sources.
- **Public Private Initiatives (PPI)** – In line with Federal transportation initiatives, Georgia is utilizing PPIs to deliver transportation projects. A PPI is a contractual arrangement where public and private entities merge common goals and available resources. PPIs arrange financing, construct projects, maintain transportation facilities and pay back debt with toll and fare revenues collected directly from users of the facility.

FUNDING

System expansion projects in the *Envision6* RTP are focused across three systems:

- Interstate/Freeway System & Managed Lane System
- Regional Arterial System
- Regional Transit System

Envision6 System Funding

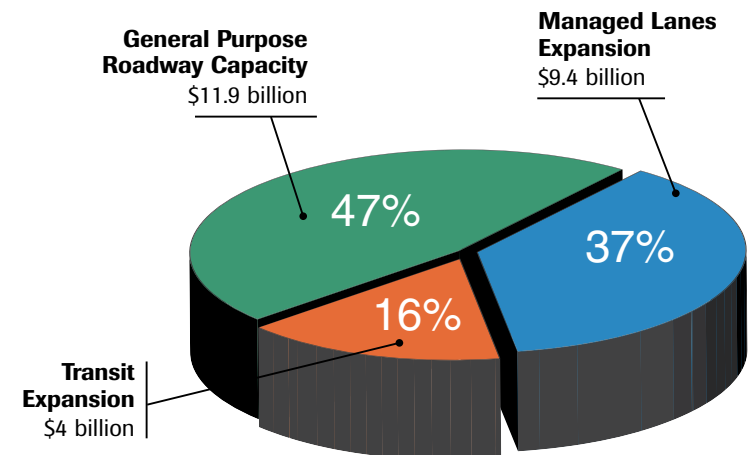


Projected Source of Federal Funds for the Atlanta Region

(excludes bond payments and proceeds)

18-counties – in \$ billions

Year	Highway	Transit	Total
2008 – 2013	\$3.4	\$0.9	\$4.3
2014 – 2021	\$4.4	\$1.1	\$5.5
2022 – 2030	\$9.4	\$1.9	\$11.3
TOTAL	\$17.2	\$3.9	\$21.1



MOVING FORWARD

The *Envision6* RTP is a critical step forward in the region's strategy for enhancing mobility. However, much is yet to be done. The *Envision6* RTP planning process identified the following areas for further initiatives in the next planning cycle:

Funding Strategies:

1. Explore and identify additional funding resources for transportation improvements in the region.
2. Develop policies that support the implementation of new and innovative financial resources.

Transportation Demand Management and System Planning Strategies:

1. Continue enhancing coordination between transportation and land use planning.
2. Continue identifying projects and programs supporting the preservation of the region's existing infrastructure.
3. Continue identifying projects and programs that seek to manage existing infrastructure.
4. Continue developing and refining system planning for managed lanes, freight, transit, thoroughfares, bicycles and pedestrians and the interstate system.
5. Focus on identifying and resolving significant regional bottlenecks.

Institutional Strategies:

1. Identify opportunities to improve organizational relationships to improve efficiency in project planning, delivery and utilization of innovative funding sources.



Envision6 CD

The *Envision6* RTP in its entirety is included on this CD ROM.

This disk contains:

- *Envision6* documentation
- Project information in a variety of formats
- Supporting information on the planning process

Atlanta Regional Commission

Let us know what you think!

ARC welcomes your feedback on transportation planning activities in the Atlanta region and on the *Envision6* process:

Address your comments to:

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